



PSYCHIC BIRTHDAY PREDICTOR



The “Diary Trick” effect has become very popular in recent times. The basic effect is this: A date book is introduced. In the space under each date the name of a playing card is printed. A spectator tells you her birthday and after some byplay, selects a card. When the spectator looks up her birthday in the book, the name of the playing card printed there matches the card she selected. Most versions of this effect have the same drawback viz. the booklet cannot be examined due to massive quantities of duplicate card names. Simon Aronson’s use of the memorized deck in this plot allows him to use a very deceptive calendar that is highly examinable. The basic requirement in all variations is that you can figure out what card is printed at each date. This card is then forced, leading to the mind-blowing finale. When memory is being used, fewer possibilities are easier to remember but this leads to an unexaminable booklet. The spectators would quickly notice the duplicates. The routine described here has the advantage of eliminating memory entirely and also differs from previous versions in that there is no set up in the deck and also no force.

EFFECT: First there is a bit of byplay during which the magician discusses the difficulty both of remembering people’s birthdays and of choosing appropriate cards. The performer explains that he never has to shop for birthday cards since he has access to 52 possible cards - the deck. The only difficulty is selecting an appropriate card. A spectator reveals the birthday of a friend or relative and is asked if she knows how to tell which of the 52 cards would be appropriate for that person. The magician explains that one need not waste time considering the options since there is a standard card assigned to each date. The magician removes a wallet from his jacket, opens it and removes a date-book. When the date-book is opened, it is found that each date is assigned a particular playing card. The magician explains that this booklet allows you to choose the appropriate card for anyone’s birthday. The spectator looks up her friend’s birthday and finds that the correct card for that birthday is, say, the Queen of clubs. The magician opens a zippered compartment in the wallet and removes a sealed envelope. The envelope is opened and inside is a card with the words “Happy Birthday” written on the face. The card is opened by the spectator and inside is a face down playing card. Yes - it is the Queen of clubs!!

REQUISITES: To perform the routine as described above you will need a Le Paul style wallet that allows you to load a card into an envelope. You’ll have to palm a card to use this type wallet. Alternately you could use a Mullica style wallet to avoid palming. You won’t be able to have the card end up in an envelope, however. There is an advantage to the Mullica wallet, though. It contains an insert ideal for holding a date-book. It’s your choice.

Also required is a small yearly calendar booklet (date-book) which has space under each date for schedule information, birthdays etc. The calendar needs to be small enough to fit inside the wallet. Six inches by 3 inches is an ideal size. You will have to spend a bit of time writing the names of cards into the booklet - one card for each date. There is a pattern to the listing of cards that will make the book

very examinable. Here are the details:

The Date-book: You need to assign each card in the deck to a number from 1 to 52. If you do memorized deck work, you already have done this. I use the Aronson stack and thus for me card 1 is the JS, card 2 is the KC, card 3 is the 5C and so on. You may simply shuffle the deck and then write down on paper the numbers from 1 to 52. After each number write the card that resides at that number in your shuffled deck. Once you have your list you are ready to start filling out the date-book. In order that a pattern not be noticed in the date-book, it's important that the same card not appear at the same date number each month. Simon Aronson suggests adding the month number (e.g. January is 1, February is 2 etc) to the date number. Thus Feb. 3rd is associated with deck number 5 since Feb. is month 2 and the date is the 3rd. ($3 + 2 = 5$). August 3rd would have a different card since August is month 8 and $8 + 3 = 11$. If you use the Aronson numbering system (as used on the Index below), the card for Feb. 3rd is the 5th card viz. the 9S. The card for Aug. 3rd is the 11th card viz. the 10S. Similarly Aug. 21st is associated with 29 since Aug. is the 8th month and $21 + 8 = 29$. January 1st goes with card number 2 while Jan. 31st goes with card number 32. December 1st goes with card number 13 (Dec. is month 12). And Dec. 31st goes with card number 43 ($12 + 31 = 43$). It will take awhile to completely fill out the 365 dates. Be sure to add the month number and then look at your chart. Once you determine the card for the 1st of the month, the rest go in sequence. You won't have to keep computing. Be sure you understand the numbering system before beginning the task of fill out the date-book!

The Big Question: How will you know what card goes with any named birthday? If you know a memorized deck order, all you do is add the date number to the month number and you immediately know the appropriate card. However, most people haven't paid those dues. Here's a method that fits the nature of the routine and eliminates memory:

The Index: You'll need to create a small *index* card that contains the information. You'll also need a rationale for looking at a card. Here are the details: A playing card sized card is ideal. One side of the card is printed in large letters with *the words "Signs of the Zodiac."* The other side contains in small letters the 12 astrological signs and the birthday range associated with the sign. For example Capricorn's range is Dec. 22 to Jan. 19. Besides the date ranges, you must also print the cards associated with the numbers from 2 (Jan. 1) to 43 (Dec. 31). This covers all possible dates. The ideal way to construct this little index is to use a computer and a laser or inkjet printer. You can laminate the final index. It will look professionally printed and not be as suspicious. You may as well make a second, identical index which only contains the dates associated with the astrological signs. Then, if someone wants to see the list, you have something that can be passed out. These two indexes are kept in your jacket pocket. **Figure 1** shows a sample index. Corel Draw is a great graphics package. It comes with tons of clipart too. You can put the Symbols for the astrological signs in color on the front side of your

THE INDEX

Capricorn	Dec 22 - Jan 19
Aquarius	Jan 20 - Feb 19
Pisces	Feb 20 - Mar 20
Aries	Mar 21 - Apr 19
Taurus	Apr 20 - May 20
Gemini	May 20 - Jun 20
Cancer	Jun 21 - Jul 22
Leo	Jul 23 - Aug 22
Virgo	Aug 23 - Sep 22
Libra	Sep 23 - Oct 23
Scorpio	Oct 24 - Nov 22
Sagittarius	Nov 23 - Dec 21

2KC 35C 42H 59S 6AS 73H
 86C 98D 10AC 1110S 125H
 132D 14KD 157D 168C 173S
 18AD 197S 205S 21QD 22AH
 238S 243D 257H 26QH 275D
 287C 294H 30KH 314D 3210D
 33JC 34JH 3510C 36JD 374S
 3810H 396H 403C 412S 429H
 43KS

Fig. 1

index. O.K. - you are armed and dangerous! Let's put it all together:

ROUTINE: You have your prepared calendar inside the wallet. Your index is in your jacket pocket. The deck is completely unprepared. Here we go - Say, *"Do you have as much trouble as I do picking out the right birthday card for your friends?? You probably go to a stationery store to get a card. We magicians don't need to. We always have 52 cards to choose from!"* Spread the deck face up from left to right. Pick a spectator (Mary) and say, *"Mary, can you tell me the birthday of one of your friends or family members?"* Let's say that the date is April 6th. If you know your stack by heart you can quickly figure out which card is written on the calendar under April 6th. Otherwise use the index as follows: Remove the index from your pocket so that the spectators can see the words "Signs of the Zodiac." Look up the sign associated with April 6th. It turns out to be Aries. Since April is month 4, you'll need to look at the indexing system and find what card is at number 10 (month 4 plus day 6). In the Aronson stack the card would be the ace of clubs. Say, *"I see that your friend is an Aries. I'm not sure exactly what that means but some people would use that fact in picking out an appropriate birthday card."* Point at the spread of cards and say, *"Certain cards are actually better for certain people. Just like with store bought birthday cards."* While you are talking, spot the location of the ace of clubs in the spread. This is the card that must end up in your wallet. Pick up the spread and contrive to get the ace of clubs to the bottom of the **face up** spread. Flip the deck over and hold it in left hand dealing position. The ace of clubs is now on top.

Assuming you are using a Le Paul type wallet (see *Final Thoughts* for the use of other wallets), palm the top card (AC) and load the wallet as you go to your pocket to retrieve it. Open the wallet and remove the date-book, leaving the loaded wallet on the table. Say, *"I never have to think about which card to give someone since I have this. This calendar tells me which card goes with which birthday."* Show a few dates in months other than April. But stay away from other dates that use the ace of clubs. Say, *"Look, if your friend had been born on December 4th, she should be given the eight of clubs. You should check April 4th to see what card suits your friend."* Mary will find and announce that the card is the ace of clubs.

Open the zipper compartment of the wallet and remove the envelope. Make sure that the spectators see that there are no other envelopes in the wallet. Tear the end off, destroying the evidence of a path into the envelope and remove the card. Hand it to Mary and say, *"There's something inside that might interest you. Take a look."* Make sure Mary shows everyone that the ace of clubs is inside for the killer ending.

FINAL THOUGHTS: The ploy of spreading the cards and talking about a selection method eliminates the need for a stacked deck. The use of the Signs of the Zodiac index card allows you to do it without needing a memorized system. In the traditional approach to this type of effect, the appropriate card is forced on the spectator. Once a card is in play, the spectators will anticipate the ending i.e. the card listed in the date-book will match the "free" selection. I prefer the surprise ending given here. No one anticipates that the birthday card will contain the card listed for the random birth date.

Using a Mullica wallet allows you to perform this without palming. It also provides a nice holder for the calendar. I recommend waiting until after the date has been looked up on the calendar before showing that there is a card in the wallet. You can use a Kaps/Balducci style wallet for walkaround. You'll lose the envelope with the birthday card but will be able to repeat it at every table if you like.

ONE LAST THOUGHT: If you use the method involving the birthday card, the card might say "Happy Birthday from *your name*" and have your picture and phone number on it. (Again an inkjet

printer is a wonderful tool.) Now, besides increasing the impossibility level, you have a nice give-away item. For a walkaround environment, consider using a Kaps/Balducci style wallet (no envelope). You can still load the wallet with a folded happy birthday card with your picture and phone number. The guide will load the palmed card inside the birthday card. You just don't get the extra layer of impossibility that the envelope provides. It's easy to reload the Kaps/Balducci wallet with another birthday card for the next table.

CREDITS: The "Diary Trick" concept belongs to Alex Elmsley. The version described here originally appeared in **Channel One Magazine**, issue 10.